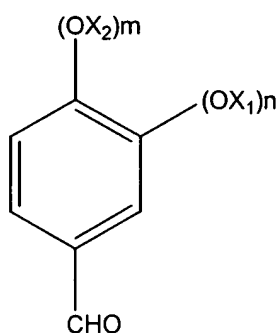


Please amend the application filed on even date herewith prior to proceeding with its examination.

### IN THE CLAIMS

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1. (Previously Presented) Process for obtaining a compound of formula (IV)



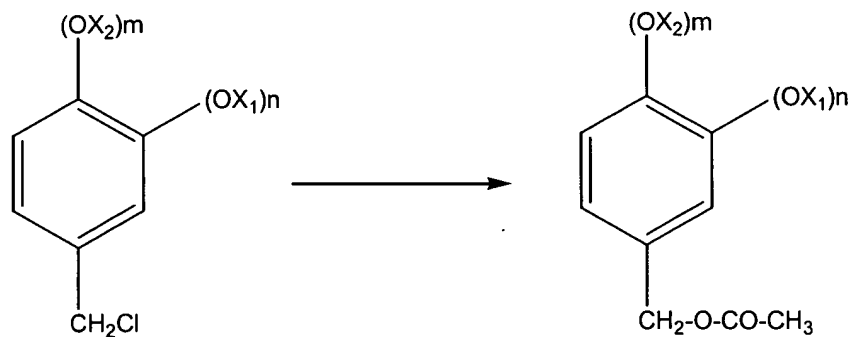
(IV)

in which  $X_1$  and  $X_2$ , the same or different, are linear or branched C1-C8 alkyls,  $n$  and  $m$  are 0,1 or 2, with the proviso that  $n$  and  $m$  cannot be simultaneously 0; or  
10  $(OX_1)_n$  and  $(OX_2)_m$  taken together form an O-T-O group where T is chosen from -  
 $CH_2$ -,  $-CH_2CH_2$ -,  $-CH_2CH_2CH_2$ -,  $-C(CH_3)_2$ -,

said process comprising the following passages:

(i) treating a chloromethyl derivative of formula (I) with an alkaline acetate to form the acetyl derivative of formula (II), where  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $m$  and  $n$  have the aforesaid

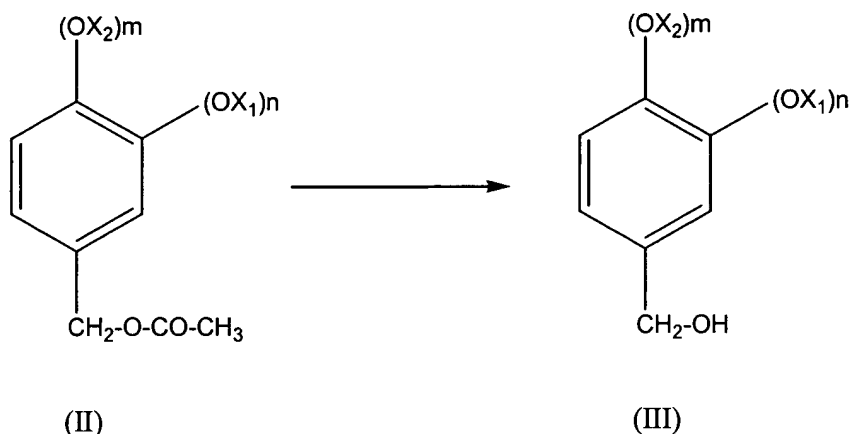
15 meanings;



(I)

(II)

(ii) hydrolyzing compound (II) to form the alcohol (III), where  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $m$  and  $n$  have the aforesaid meanings;



5

(iii) catalytic oxidation of the alcohol (III) to form the compound (IV) wherein the passage (iii) is conducted by treating in the liquid phase the product of passage (ii) with air or oxygen and an alkaline hydroxide used in a hydroxide/alcohol (III) equivalent ratio between 1 and 2, in the presence of a suitable oxidation catalyst.

10

2. (Original) Process as claimed in claim 1, wherein  $X_1$  and  $X_2$  are chosen from a C1-C4 alkyl or taken together correspond to the -O-CH<sub>2</sub>-O- group.

3. (Currently Amended) Process as claimed in claim[s] 1[-2], wherein the passage (i) is conducted by adding an organic solution of the derivative (I) to an aqueous solution containing an alkaline acetate such that, in the resultant mixture, the volume of water constitutes at least 50% of the organic phase.

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4. (Original) Process as claimed in claim 3, wherein the molar ratios of alkaline acetate to chloromethyl derivative (I) are between 1:1 and 3:1 and the reaction temperature is between 40°C and 85°C.

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5. (Original) Process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the molar ratios of alkaline acetate to chloromethyl derivative (I) are between 1.3:1 and 1.6:1 and the reaction temperature is between 70°C and 80°C.

6. (Currently Amended) Process as claimed in claim[s] 1[-5], wherein the passage (ii) is conducted by adding aqueous NaOH and a phase transfer catalyst,

of the ammonium salts group, to the product of passage (i).

7. (Original) Process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the molar ratio of NaOH to chloromethyl derivative (I) is between 3:1 and 1:1 and that of the phase transfer catalyst to NaOH is between 1:100 and 1:400, the reaction being  
5 conducted at a temperature between 60°C and 85°C.

8. (Currently Amended) Process as claimed in claim[s] 1[-7], wherein the passage (iii) is conducted in a water: organic solvent mixture, in which the weight ratio of water to organic solvent present is between 0.5:1 and 2:1.

9. (Currently Amended) Process as claimed in claim[s] 1[-8], wherein in  
10 passage (iii) the weight percentage of the catalyst, considered as 50 wt% wetted relative to the alcohol (III) varies from 1% to 15%, the reaction solvent is a toluene/water mixture, the quantity of base is between 1 and 2 equivalents relative to the alcohol (III), the reaction temperature is between 20°C and 85°C, and the moles of fed oxygen are 3-6 times in excess of the substrate to be oxidized.

15 10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)